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TO: **Economic Support Supervisors
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FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
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BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No.: 03-55

Date: 09/05/2003

Non W-2 ☒ W-2 ☐ CC ☐

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: **2004 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM MASS CHANGE**

CROSS REFERENCE: Food Stamp Handbook, Appendix 18 and 16.08.00

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2003

PURPOSE

This memo announces the Food Stamp (FS) cost of living adjustments (COLA) and the new utility standard amounts for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2004.

BACKGROUND

Each year, USDA - Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) adjusts the gross and net income limits, the allotment tables, standard deduction amounts, and the excess shelter expense deduction. The utility standard amounts are also adjusted based on average utility costs statewide.

POLICY

FS COLA FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2004

Reference table changes have been made in CARES, so that ongoing cases will use the new amounts effective October 1, 2003. The mass change will occur on September 5, 2003. The FS mass change will select all FS cases and process eligibility for October using the new

reference table changes and standards. Eligibility determinations for FS for October 2003 and later will use the new amounts. These amounts are found in CARES tables TFST and TFEP. They will be added to Appendix 18 of the FS Handbook in the next release.

REMEMBER ➤ New alert, "349 ELIG. NOT DET, AT AA/RUN SFEX" was created to notify workers when a case did not update at adverse action. These are the same cases that are listed on the EOS exception report C306.

Following are changes effective October 1, 2003:

Maximum Excess Shelter Deduction

The maximum excess shelter deduction will increase to \$378.

Income Limit & Allotment Changes

AG Size	165% FPL Gross Income Limit	130% FPL Gross Income Limit	100% FPL Net Income Limit	Maximum Allotment
1	\$ 1235	\$ 973	\$ 749	\$ 141
2	\$ 1667	\$ 1313	\$ 1010	\$ 259
3	\$ 2099	\$ 1654	\$ 1272	\$ 371
4	\$ 2530	\$ 1994	\$ 1534	\$ 471
5	\$ 2962	\$ 2334	\$ 1795	\$ 560
6	\$ 3394	\$ 2674	\$ 2057	\$ 672
7	\$ 3826	\$ 3014	\$ 2319	\$ 743
8	\$ 4257	\$ 3354	\$ 2580	\$ 849
9	\$ 4689	\$ 3695	\$ 2842	\$ 955
10	\$ 5121	\$ 4036	\$ 3104	\$ 1061
11	\$ 5553	\$ 4377	\$ 3366	\$ 1167
12	\$ 5985	\$ 4718	\$ 3628	\$ 1273

(AG = Assistance Group, FPL = Federal Poverty Level)

NOTE ➤ Notices of decision that impact reduced change reporting requirements will also be adjusted to reflect the new 130% FPL income reporting limits.

Standard Deduction

The Standard Deduction increase is based on the Assistance Group size.

AG Size	Standard Deduction Amount
1-4	\$134
5	\$149
6 or more	\$171

NOTE ➤ The following deductions will not change:

- Maximum monthly Dependent Care - \$200 or \$175 depending on the age of the child.
- Medical Expenses – Monthly expenses over \$35 for elderly or disabled individuals only.

New Standard Utility Allowances

Standard	Allowance	Definition
HSUA	\$241	Heating
LUA	\$133	No heat, with at least two other qualifying expenses
EUA	\$66	Non-heat electric
FUA	\$23	Cooking fuel used for other than heating, gas, LP, etc.
WUA	\$22	Water, well installation and maintenance, sewer, septic tank installation and maintenance, and/or wastewater treatment
PUA	\$23	Telephone
TUA	\$15	Garbage and trash pick up

PROCEDURE

Any cases that are run for FS eligibility after September 5, 2003 will have the new SUA policy applied effective October 1, 2003.

OTHER PROGRAMS

There is no change in the shelter and utility budgeting for MA. Actual shelter and utility costs still need to be obtained from the customer and entered into CARES to assure the correct MA eligibility and post eligibility determinations. See the MA Handbook for specific policy.

CONTACTS

BHCE CARES Information & Problem Resolution Center

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Note: Email contacts are preferred. Thank you.

DHFS/DHCF/BIMA/JB